

Minutes

February 18, 2011

Des Moines, IA

Call to Order

The Iowa Commission on Aging convened in Room 310 of the Ola Babcock Miller Building. Commission Chair, Daniel Ernst, called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM.

Roll Call

Members Present

Daniel Ernst, Chair
Nancy Nichols
Judy Bevers
Ken Petersen
Dava James (10:04)
Ralph Wolf

Members Absent

Linda Larkin
Sen. Heckroth*
Sen. Johnson*
Rep. Pettengill*
Rep. Thede*

The arrival times of members who entered after roll call are noted.

*Non-voting, Ex-officio members

Others Present: Available on hardcopy. Others connected telephonically: Connie Holland

Agenda

Action: There was a motion by Commissioner Petersen, and a second by Commissioner Wolf to approve the agenda as presented. All members present voted: Aye. Motion carried.

Minutes

Action: There was a motion by Commissioner Petersen, and a second by Commissioner Wolf to approve the minutes of January 10, 2011. All members present voted: Aye. Motion carried.

Directors Report

Director Harvey's report to the Commission included details of House File 45, her presentation to the joint Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee, Area Plans, and conference calls with the area agencies.

Legislative Update

Janny Peterson, IDA, went over the IDA Bill Watch document that contains bills of interest to the department.

Aging Resources of Central Iowa

Directory Harvey reported on where things were with the prepayment/audit issues involving Aging Resources of Central Iowa. Discussion was held.

Budget Recommendations

Director Harvey reviewed budget recommendations with the commission, and went through the PowerPoint she presented to the joint Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee. Discussion held.

Area Plan Discussion

Director Harvey proposed a change in the traditional two-day June meeting which focuses on presentations by the 13 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). In 2011, the Commission will travel to areas of the state, inviting AAAs to make their presentation in or near the region they serve. A synopsis of the 13 Area Plans will be provided in June allowing for commission approval of the plans at that time.

Action: There was a motion by Commissioner Petersen, and a second by Commissioner James to approve the recommendation that future meetings be held regionally as presented. All members present voted: Aye. Motion carried.

Web Site Update

Danika Welsch, IDA, provided an update on department's web site. Discussion was held.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Presentation

Jeanne Yordi, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO), gave a presentation of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program to the commission. Discussion was held.

Announcements from the Commission and/or Department Staff

Dates for the next commission meeting were discussed. The commission agreed by consensus the next regular meeting would be held in Cedar Falls the evening of April 6.

The commissioners discussed attending the 2011 Rural Aging Conference in Cedar Falls, April 7.

Public Comment

Barb Morrison, Southwest 8 Senior Services Director and Iowa Association of Area Agencies on Aging (i4a) President, addressed the commission.

The area agencies are please to have Donna Harvey as Director of the department. She has greatly opened up communication with weekly phone calls, asking for input, and listening. Working together will go a great distance in improving the lives of seniors in Iowa.

There was a very good turnout i4a's advocacy day at the capitol. They received good reception as they reached out to their Representatives. They were hearing the \$8.5 million is in the budget and will not be in jeopardy of coming out of the Governor's budget. They talked to them about the \$1 million reduction to the department's budget letting them know the area agencies did agree to take \$550,000 of the reduction. A \$1 million cut to the department would be detrimental and they want a strong state department. However they did reinforce there will be some negative effect on services at the local level. The area agencies need to look at what that effect actually would be. AARP will also communicate this message at their upcoming legislative day. She's asked the commissioners to also communicate this message.

The i4a through Administration on Aging (AoA) have contracted with the department for money to expand evidence based programs. Initially 9 out of the 13 AAAs were involved in either the Better Choices Better Health program or the Matter of Balance program. With the assistance of Mark Hanson, i4a Director, all 13 AAA now have someone trained in one or both evidence based programs. Kim Keleher, Siouxland Aging Services Director, wrote a grant that would help expand the programs to all 13 AAAs. Within the President's budget (federal) they are looking putting money into Older Americans Act (OAA) funding for the evidence programs, so the AAAs would no longer have to depend upon the grants which can get complicated.

The i4a is sponsoring Older Iowan's Day, August 17, at the State Fair. The i4a has expanded their committee which includes IDA and AARP. Events will take place at the Budweiser tent. The older Iowans Idol contest will be held again this year. There will also be a tent on main street to present information on the Family Caregiver Program.

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) has an advocacy day in Washington DC in April where people from all over the United States meet with their federal congressional staff. Contact your local AAA or Mark Hanson, i4a, if you are interested in attending.

Having the AAAs host commission meetings will allow the agencies to tell more of their story, to provide a better picture of the local areas. This would be an opportunity for service providers to come talk with the commission for them to learn how services are provided in the rural areas and what some of the challenges are.

John Hale, Iowa Caregivers Association, acknowledged the association does a lot of work with the department as well as Jeanne Yordi and that they greatly value the relationship. He complimented Yordi and Harvey on the presentations they made to the Joint Health and Human Service Appropriations Subcommittee and looks forward to the relationship with everyone.

The direct care workforce is the largest workforce in the state of Iowa. They total over 50,000 workers. They are the fastest growing, highest demand in the state of Iowa. Three of the top ten high growth high demand jobs in the state of Iowa and across the nation are direct care worker jobs with the bulk of them being programmed into home care as that's the way the trends are moving, away from facilities into more home care. They are also the most difficult positions to fill and retain people in. We need to figure out ways across Iowa and the nation to make these jobs more attractive jobs. The reality is we will not be able to keep people in these jobs if we continue to view them as low pay, low skill, high turnover, anybody can do this job. Those that have been touched by a good direct care worker know they are priceless. The reality from the public policy standpoint is we are content to pay them \$9.50/10.00 an hour. 45% of them have no health insurance. 50% have not access to sick leave, so they go to work sick or don't get paid. He looks forward to working with the department and a lot others throughout the state to see what can be done to address this fundamental problem.

Mr. Hale extended an invitation to a forum being held Tuesday, February 22 at 6:00 PM at the Botanical Center featuring Lt. Governor Reynolds to focus on the issues he just spoke about.

Commissioner James recommended Mr. Hale give a presentation to the commission of all their data and information.

Mark Hanson, Iowa Association of Area Agencies on Aging Executive Director, commented that Director Havery is a past president of the National Association on Area Agencies on Aging and brings to Iowa a much broader national scope of intelligence that the commission should know about that will be very helpful as we look at this modernization (of the aging network). We aren't alone. Many other states have dealt with similar issues and there are good models out there. Director Harvey will bring some resources to all of us in that regard.

Mr. Hanson spoke of the open communication between the department staff and AAAs that did not exist before that is important for the work that's moving forward.

In the Des Moines Register today was an article on the Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) reduction of areas from 55 to 16 was in. The 16 areas are the same exact 16 spots the AAAs have their offices. IWD in closing the smaller rural offices are suggesting the access point is in the library system.

The commission was asked to actively engage post-session the four legislators and involve them directly in these discussions. It would be very helpful.

A potential discussion for the future could be the use of consistent terminology addressing older Iowans as we move forward.

Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss at this time, Commissioner Nichols moved, Commissioner Bevers seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 12:20 PM.

Chair

Date

Recording Secretary

Date